

Emigration of Scottish Steelworkers to Canada: Impacts on Social Networks

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the 1960s–1980s, many steelworkers emigrated from the regions in and around Glasgow, Scotland, seeking better economic opportunities in other industrial cities, including Hamilton in Ontario, Canada. However, little is known about how this move affected the social networks of the steelworkers and their families at the time of immigration and how their social networks had evolved over time. Fifteen former Scottish steelworkers living in the Hamilton area and the daughter of one deceased steelworker were interviewed for this study. Immigration to Canada had clearly disrupted their social networks, as many experienced the loss of valued relationships with parents, neighbours, and co-workers left behind in Scotland. These losses led to homesickness for many steelworkers and their wives and had driven some families back to their home country. Despite cultural similarities to the broader population, the steelworkers still experienced social isolation at times that limited their ability to form supportive networks (particularly with co-workers and neighbours). Over time, a change in lifestyle as a result of immigration increased social advantages in Canada, and involvement in recreational sports contributed to the strengthening of relationships (particularly with their immediate family members and fellow Scottish immigrants) and the formation of new social networks, albeit ones that differed from those they had left behind in Scotland. This study helped to identify circumstances that both challenge and ease the formation of social networks for immigrants and contribute to our understanding of how context

influences the evolution of social networks for new arrivals. © 2014 The Authors. *Population, Space and Place* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the 19th century, many Scots have immigrated to Canada, often motivated by the desire to improve economic situations. As a centre of immigration, Hamilton, Ontario, has long been associated with immigration from Scotland and strong ties to Glasgow (Weaver, 1982). By the mid-1800s, Hamilton–Glasgow ties included cultural, trade, and business links to commercial interests in Glasgow, and a prominent Scottish mercantile community played major roles in many aspects of the early city, including its cultural offerings, along with its business ties.

Canadians of Scottish descent currently make up approximately five million or 15% of the Canadian population, approximately equal to the current population of Scotland, leaving their impression on rivers and place names across the country (Calder, 2003). The deindustrialisation of the Scottish economy in the latter half of the 20th century had a severe impact on the older traditional industries such as shipbuilding and steelmaking, most situated in the county of Lanarkshire, in or near the city of Glasgow. The Glasgow area was largely depressed with few job opportunities, and many tradespeople became unemployed; some remained in the Scottish steel industry or obtained employment in other sectors, whereas others sought new opportunities in the steel industry elsewhere including Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, where the industry was thriving.

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Scottish immigration to Canada crested in the 1960s, with nearly 44,000 Scottish immigrants arriving in Canada between 1966 and 1969 alone (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2013). Changing immigration laws in source countries to Canada meant that the number of Scottish immigrants declined over the 1970s, with 33,000 arriving between 1970 and 1979. Many British immigrants at the time were young men – some single and some with wives and young children – looking to begin or advance their careers in a place that offered better opportunities for themselves and their families, and relocated across the country (see, e.g. Richardson, 1961 and Nicholson-Lord, 2004). Although wives were often ‘trailing spouses’, social adjustment to their new place of residence was often closely related to their satisfaction (Richardson, 1961). On the other hand, some studies have found that wives are instrumental in choices over where to migrate to (including from Scotland to Canada) and the importance of the availability of good quality housing in those decisions (Elliot, 1997). However, little is known about the experiences of those who left Lanarkshire to move to Canada. Specifically, how did the move from Scotland to Canada affect steelworkers’ social relationships?

Geographers and other researchers in the field of immigration studies have long recognised the vital role played by social networks¹ in the adaptation strategies associated with relocation, especially those involving significant geographical and/or socio-cultural transitions (Boyd, 1989; Slonim-Nevo *et al.*, 2009). Although immigration is often associated with moves to improve economic opportunities (Massey *et al.*, 1993) and commonly occurs in tandem with changes in the life course events (i.e. Rossi, 1980), immigration also implies leaving their ‘home’ country and necessitates leaving established relationships and the support networks of family, friends, co-workers, and neighbours and establishing relationships within their new community. Social networks take time to evolve and broaden (Hagan, 1998), and many immigrants find it difficult to replace or supplement valuable relationships lost post-migration. Schellenberg and Maheux (2007), for example, found that a lack of social relationships was a greater challenge for more immigrants to Canada than racism or discrimination. Consistently, immigrants are found to socialise less, have fewer friends and less

emotional support than non-immigrants within the same community (Golding & Baezconde-Garbanati, 1990; de Palo *et al.*, 2006; Thomas, 2011). Likewise, immigrants have been observed to have a smaller network of friends and contacts than those born in Canada – even 10 or more years after arriving – and are less likely to be involved in social organisations or community groups (Thomas, 2011).

Rather than a single move from point A to point B, immigration is a dynamic process, throughout which immigrants evaluate the personal costs and benefits of their place of residence (Boyd, 1989). Personal relationships are a key influence throughout this process: spurring a decision to migrate, the desire to stay (or not) in a new location, and the impetus for others to follow (Boyd, 1989; Creese *et al.*, 2008; Slonim-Nevo *et al.*, 2009). Just as immigration is not a static event, social networks are ever evolving, as personal relationships are formed and severed over time (Hagan, 1998). These changes in social networks naturally feedback as immigrants continue to re-evaluate their satisfaction with immigration decisions.

The importance of post-migration social networks is based on the concept that social networks are a form of social capital. In other words, networks are an asset that can connect new immigrants to valuable resources (material, informational, or emotional) and aid their adjustment to a new community. The benefits of social networks for immigrants are well documented. For example, in Canada, immigrants with a diverse network of social ties (friends and acquaintances) are more likely to find and retain a job, have higher wages, and acquire better quality housing than those with fewer social ties, or who rely upon formal established services, such as immigrant settlement groups (Thomas, 2011; Xue, 2008; Moriah, 2004). The strength of immigrants’ social networks post-migration – with new contacts, those who moved with them, and those who remained in their homeland – can directly predict their experience of homesickness, the time it takes them to adjust to their new home, and their desire to stay (Ryan, 2009; Watt & Badger, 2009).

The literature presents varied viewpoints about exactly which forms of social capital immigrants draw from their social networks. The primary theoretical framework that informs this study comes from the social capital literature

with particular focus on the work of Putnam, although the broader perspective provided by Bourdieu is also relevant. Bourdieu's theory presents social networks as a means to 'get ahead', to uphold, or increase social standing (Bourdieu, 1985; Cheong *et al.*, 2007). From this standpoint, social capital is presented as a commodity, inherently based on social inequities and measured in comparison with others (Wakefield & Poland, 2005; Cheong *et al.*, 2007). In this way, accumulation of social capital is contingent on various forms of social inclusion and exclusion and is closely tied to measures of economic capital.

More recently, the work of Putnam has presented a more co-operative view of social capital as generated from 'bonds of community' (Putnam, 2001: vi), or 'networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate co-operation for mutual benefit' (Wakefield & Poland, 2005). In this view, social capital is shared through reciprocal, supportive relationships, a 'feature of communities' (Portes, 1998) rather than an individual resource or benefit. Strong social networks can yield social benefits for immigrants by bridging cultural divides between individuals of differing social, ethnic backgrounds and promoting bonding and mutual support within ethnic communities (Evergeti & Zontini, 2006; Cheong *et al.*, 2007). Acceptance and development of social ties lead to a feeling of 'belonging' in the host country or community (Lalonde, 1993; Nesdale & Mak, 2000); as a result, networks can facilitate the inclusion of new immigrants as contributing members of a community, build community cohesion, and ease the experience of resettlement (de Palo *et al.*, 2006).

Surprisingly, given the volume of emigration from Britain during the 1960s to 1970s, 'ex-pat' immigration within the British Commonwealth – including Canada – during this time is a lightly studied area, with exceptions including Richardson (1961).² The majority of studies exploring the social impacts of immigration focus on what Beyers *et al.* (2009) refer to as 'visible' immigrants: those whose appearance, language, religion, or customs are seen as setting them apart from the cultural majority in their adopted community. In contrast, this study explores the experiences of families moving to a culturally similar country: Scots moving to Canada, a country with a history of Scottish immigration and strong links to Great Britain (i.e. Weaver, 1982). Although settlement locations

of early Scottish immigrants to Canada were frequently shaped by ethnic considerations, more recent arrivals typically did not settle in recognisable enclaves and certainly resided in diverse locations across the city by the time of the project. However, the history of linkages to home meant that, in theory, they might feel a stronger sense of 'belonging' and find it easier to form new social networks. Recognising the fact that social networks naturally broaden and change over time as immigrants gain opportunities to meet and socialise with a greater diversity of people (Hagan, 1998), this retrospective study provides valuable insights on the long-term social impacts of immigration.

The purpose of this study was therefore to explore the immigration experiences of Scottish steelworkers who moved to the Hamilton area in the 1960s to 1980s, focusing on how the move from Scotland to Canada affected steelworkers' social networks, at the time of their move and throughout their years in Canada. More specifically, we asked the following: what types of social connections did they seek out or form in Canada? In what ways did their immigration affect their relationships with friends and family left behind in Scotland? What role did the change in social networks have in easing the transition of the move from Scotland to Canada? In exploring these questions, we wish to examine how context influences the formation of social networks for new arrivals and how social networks evolve over time.

METHODS

This investigation of social networks, informed by social capital theory, focused on men who had worked in the steel industry in Scotland and immigrated to Canada in the 1960s to 1970s. Many of the target group were ageing and retired and thus more difficult to locate. The shut down of several area steelworks in Hamilton immediately before and during our study also contributed to this challenge. We used a variety of approaches to connect with potential participants: print ads in Hamilton-area newspapers and industry newsletters; recruitment posters placed at local meeting places (including the steelworkers' union office, as well as Scottish clubs, pubs, shops, and restaurants); and an information booth at three different Highland

Games. Overall, we found that an in-person approach was the best method to recruit participants. We also asked each of our participants if they could direct us to other Scottish steelworkers. However, many of our contacts – as well as managers of local pubs, Legions, and Scottish meeting places – told us that their former Scottish colleagues and friends from the steelworks had passed away in recent years. As a result, we also reached out to the families of deceased steelworkers, and one study participant is the daughter of a deceased steelworker.

We spoke with 16 participants in total. These men had worked within the shipyards and steelworks of Glasgow in positions such as sheetmetal workers, machinists, and 'platers' fabricating steel. We also included two men who had worked within the shipyards and steelworks as plumbers. Two others held office positions as draftsmen in the steelworks. Of the 16 participants, three left the steelworking trade in the years after their move to Canada: one opened a restaurant (later a Scottish pub); another began a second career as an insurance salesman; and another moved into a senior management position at a provincial utility. We conducted 12 interviews with participants in person, and four by phone. The interviews were generally 60–90 minutes long and conversational in style. We recorded each interview (with the permission of the participants) and took handwritten interview notes. Two participants were joined by their wives, who contributed to the results; all other interviews were conducted one on one. Each of the participants spoke to us confidentially and was assigned a pseudonym to protect identity.

The Scottish steelworkers ranged in age from 51 to 85 years (one was deceased, and his story was related by his daughter). All were from the Glasgow area, most born and raised in the city. Twelve of 16 participants came to Canada between 1963 and 1975, at a time when steel production in Glasgow was decreasing and the larger shipbuilding companies were starting to shut down or reduce their work force. Interestingly, although several participants mentioned this trend, none of our participants mentioned job insecurity in Glasgow as a reason for their decision to move to Canada. Instead, they talked about seeking 'a change', 'a better lifestyle', and an inability to find suitable housing, wages, and bank loans to start a life and raise a family in Scotland. Three participants arrived in the

1950s, and one other in 1981. With one exception, all were young at the time of their move (in their early 20s). At that time in Scotland, boys going into a skilled trade started a 5-year apprenticeship program at age 15 years. All of the study participants had completed their apprenticeships in Scotland, and most had worked only a year or two before their move to Canada. Of our 16 participants, 12 were married when they immigrated to Canada, and several had small children. The one participant who was older at the time of his move had worked for over 20 years in Scotland and came to Canada with his wife and four children to work as a foreman for a company that had plants both here and in Glasgow.

Using an open-ended interview, we asked the participants about their work experiences in Scotland and Canada, as well as the impact of the move on their social life and on the lives of their families. We also asked participants to reflect on their decision to emigrate: did they have any regrets? Did they view their lives as any different in Canada than they would have been in Scotland? Most studies of the social impacts of immigration focus on the immediate impacts of the move. The retrospective approach of this study facilitated a long-term view of the immigration experience with a perspective that comes with time. Participants were able to note changes and adjustments to their relationships and social networks, which had occurred over the decades post-immigration. After transcribing each of the interviews, we conducted a content analysis of the transcripts as well as our interview notes to identify and illustrate emergent themes related to the evolution of social networks post-migration. This served to reveal both recurring themes and experiences unique to particular participants.

RESULTS

Two main themes arose from our interviews: the loss of valuable relationships and disruption of social networks as a result of Scottish steelworkers' move to Canada; and the strengthening of other relationships, which helped to manage these losses and rebuild social networks.

Loss of Valued Relationships Upon Move to Canada

Our Scottish steelworker participants found that the move to Canada did disrupt their social lives.

Most of the participants described having positive relationships with family members, good friends, and/or co-workers in Scotland and missed the support and camaraderie of these connections after immigrating. Both geographical distance in an era before social media and lifestyle differences in Canada contributed to changes to their social lives and networks.

The loss of a pub social life was noted by many participants. Participants spoke of visiting the pub as a social activity, particularly in Scotland where pub life was part of the culture. Drinking there was about connecting with friends and co-workers and having 'pints with the boys' after work (Kyle). 'Life revolved around pubs', said Ken. The pub was seen as part of a close community, where work, home, and pub life were interconnected. This was especially true of the steelworkers and other tradesmen working in Glasgow.

'Most of the guys that worked in the shipyards, they were within walking distance... they would all go to the pub and they would meet other buddies from work... they were all drinking together, they were all working together' (Scott).

In general, participants spoke positively about their social life at the pub in Scotland, and pub life seemed to hold social importance both for drinkers and non-drinkers.

'In Scotland it was good because, most people lived in the same town as you worked in so you knew somebody who knew somebody... We would go to the bars and that we would play darts, dominoes in the bars and some bars would have a sing-song... Even the people like me, we went and ... I don't drink' (Neil).

Although our study participants enjoyed the pub life of Scotland, few of them frequented pubs or drinking venues to the same extent after their move to Canada. For one thing, it was less convenient. Although there were still drinking venues in town, participants did not find the same close communities with a pub on each corner.

'I was still, one could say, hanging around pubs here but not a great deal. I didn't have a local I used to go and hang out like they do in Britain, you know?' (Lorne)

Others chose to frequent the pub less after getting married and starting a family, which for many was a life change that coincided with their move to Canada. The pub was described as a 'man's world', both in Glasgow and in Hamilton, where women were often socially excluded, either by law or by social expectation. Because of this, our participants said they were more likely to socialise at the pub when they were young and single. After their marriages, Scott and Kyle both told us that the pub environment did not appeal as much, as they preferred to spend their free time with their wives and young children.

'... if [you have a wife] why would you be in a pub? I could be home with [her]... doing things together' (Kyle).

We might assume then that it was a change in life, rather than a move to Canada, which encouraged participants to spend more of their leisure time at home and less time at the pub. However, the participants themselves did not see it this way. Lorne, Derek, and Neil all said they might not have prioritised their family life over pub life to the same extent had they stayed in Scotland:

'Over there the social life was more in the bar. I think maybe I can quite easily have gotten into that life over here, too, because I know guys in the trade that spent a lot of time in bars and clubs and that sort of stuff. So, you know, maybe it was just a path that my life took' (Derek).

Certainly, a pub life did exist for some Scottish men in Hamilton; several participants frequented bars or clubs in Hamilton (such as the British Imperial Club and Royal Canadian Legions). Brenda described her deceased steelworker father as a 'regular' at such clubs.

'And so that is what Dad did when he came here, he affiliated himself with the British Imperial Club... it was all about sitting on a Saturday afternoon and having pints and pints of beer and chitchatting with the men... that was their social connection, with the drink' (Brenda).

Participants and local pub proprietors also mentioned regular nights at local bars where Scots are still known to meet each week. However, we were

unable to recruit participants for this study after placing posters at these venues or when we talked to pub regulars in person. Although the men who drank in Scotland continued to do so after they immigrated, the drinking culture in Canada was seen as less social than their experience in Scotland.

'[In] Scottish pubs, it is conversation... In my Canadian experience, particularly in the early days... drinking was the purpose of being there, not conversation' (Ken).

So, although it is clear that a pub-centred social life existed for Scottish steelworkers who immigrated, including our study participants, in Canada, the pub did not appear to hold the same social importance as it had for men in Scotland.

Participants also noted less camaraderie with co-workers in Canada than in Scotland. Overall, participants had positive memories of the camaraderie of their workplaces in Scotland, where most co-workers lived close to each other and 'palled around' together during and after work. 'Nearly everybody in the factory walked to work', Ken told us, 'because ... the whole community was there. You ate, slept, drank, worked, played in a two- or three-kilometre radius'.

In contrast, few participants socialised with their co-workers outside the workplace after immigrating. Once in Canada, the workplace, home, and social venues were spread across the city: Scots did not co-locate with others or in clearly identifiable areas and often commuted to work, decreasing the ability to socialise at pubs as it often implied driving. Many participants mentioned their close friendships with co-workers in Scotland as something they missed after their move to Canada.

'I miss the camaraderie amongst the workers. They don't seem to have that here, having fun telling jokes and, you know, meeting after work...' (Craig).

In part, personality differences and workplace expectations may have made it more difficult to befriend their co-workers in Canada. Participants described Scotsmen (and themselves) as friendly, jovial, and prone to joking and laughter – unlike many steelworkers they met

at their workplaces in the Hamilton area, where the work environment was seen as more reserved.

'I think it is more of the Scottish thing, to sort of pal together. I don't see that here' (Graham).

'I find business much colder. There was very little interplay between people' (Ken).

'... It was quite a stark difference actually because ... the Brits and the Scots are known for joviality, not taking the job too serious' (Kyle).

In Canada, workplaces also tended to be more ethnically diverse than the steelworks in Glasgow. As Scott describes of his workplace in Hamilton, 'I was sitting at a lunch table... and there was sitting at that table representatives of 10 different countries'. Some men had experienced tensions among their co-workers in their diverse workplaces after moving to Canada. 'If you get into a political argument, you had to watch what you were doing', said Scott, 'You didn't go there'. Keith had seen these tensions intensify into hostility among co-workers:

'When I came here, there were so many different ethnic groups... and there was a lot of animosity there... I don't know whether you would call it actually racism ... but there is no doubt in my mind [some] got the dirtiest jobs' (Keith).

Most participants did not report such overt tensions, however; in fact, as Scott described, 'Everybody had a kind of respect for each other's beliefs and what they did because you had to work with these guys every day'. However, although Scott said that his diverse workplace 'worked really quite well', he felt that the cultural differences among his workmates meant that they could not identify or relate to each other as closely as he had with co-workers in Scotland and inhibited them from forming close friendships with co-workers.

'... I've been in a company for years and still think, well, these guys, you know, they don't understand me, they don't get me' (Scott).

Like Scott, Kyle and Craig felt excluded from their workplace social circles, seeing themselves

as 'outsiders' with less sense of belonging than they experienced in Scotland.

'It took you time to adjust to the difference because you were in a new country, you were unsure of yourself. And everybody in this machine shop here is usually from a different place... So it took a little ... to get comfortable with that because you were always the new guy on the block sort of thing' (Kyle).

'I work with a bunch of guys that... they all kind of stick together and I'm the outsider' (Craig).

In Scotland, the steelworkers had worked with men whose lifestyle, language, and upbringing were similar to their own.

'[In Scotland] there was always British people around there and you tend to relate more to them. So you tend to make friends more with them' (Craig).

'In Scotland, you were all Scotsmen', said Keith. Among their co-workers there, participants had felt more connected, more supported, and more understanding of each others' experience.

The loss of family ties, owing to the distance from Scottish family, also weighed heavily on many. Most participants had lived near their parents and siblings in Scotland and valued their close relationships with their family.

'I had a big family, a family I loved dearly and I still miss, to this day' (Scott).

After immigrating, these close ties with family were often difficult to retain. Some accepted this fact and viewed the loss of close relationships friends and family in Scotland as an inevitable outcome of moving so far away. 'Lives change', said Graham, 'And they say you can't go back again, in your life. Because you've got your life here and your friends here'. However, others voiced regret that their move to Canada necessitated a move away from these irreplaceable relationships. For most, it was their only regret.

'My family, I missed my family. That was the biggest thing' (Ken).

A few participants were able to return to Scotland to visit regularly over the years, and these men reported having closer ties to friends and family there. However, those who were unable to visit Scotland often found it difficult to keep in touch and retain those connections. Brenda was 12 years old when her family moved from Glasgow to Hamilton. She had a close relationship with her family in Scotland— particularly her grandparents – but felt that physical distance had contributed to the loss of those ties as she grew older.

'Emigrating from your homeland has certain drawbacks. I mean, certainly not being around all of the family, my mom's family, my dad's family. I felt a void growing up, you know, missing all their weddings and the birth of their babies, and things like that, and actually forgetting their names... being away from them from them for so long, I don't really know who they are' (Brenda).

Several steelworkers had experienced homesickness after moving to Canada, feeling distant from family in Scotland.

'It was hard at first. You miss the family and that, you know. I had a lot of cousins and we were all pretty close. I missed them. I got a wee bit homesick, eh?' (Keith)

Twelve of the 16 steelworkers were married to women from Scotland. With their husbands off at work for most of the day, and without close connections to their neighbours, homesickness was especially common among Scottish wives, many of whom were not working outside of the home.

'So many of the women were homesick ... you know, in their early twenties, and leaving their mothers and fathers behind; it was a big thing for them. Whereas, the men, we were at work, and you are occupied in other ways. So, it was very much better for the guys than it was for the wives' (Bob).

Both Neil and Bob told us their wives were reluctant to move from Scotland, away from their parents and close family members. 'It was me wanted to come', admitted Neil. After 5 years in Canada, he said, his wife 'started to come around' and now, he says, she does not regret

their decision. Similarly, Bob's wife wanted to return to Scotland in the years after their move to Canada. He 'pushed' to stay, valuing their higher income and increased standard of living. Because of this, he says, they were able to afford regular visits to Scotland and tickets for her parents to visit frequently, which helped allay his wife's homesickness. However, several participants told us of immigrating families who had found the distance from family to be too great and returned to Scotland.

'A lot of people ended up going back to Scotland... A lot of [the wives] missed their family from back home. I'm not saying I didn't; I did. But, you know, the wives are really close to their mothers or their sisters and they ended up going back home' (Craig).

Alistair and his wife were philosophical about their decision to move their family to Canada, weighing the benefits of life in Canada for their children against the loss of close relationships with family.

'From time to time, we feel a little guilty about bringing our kids over here, away from the grandparents. But the grandparents never have complained so I guess they realized that we were trying to do the best we could for the kids' (Alistair).

Brenda's parents made a similar decision. She was actually born in Canada, but her family moved back to Scotland after living here for 2 years in the 1950s '... because I guess my mom was really home sick'. They returned to Canada 10 years later when 'they realized that really the better life for everyone concerned was in Canada'. Although Brenda's family ultimately chose to return to Canada, her story is reflective of the social challenges faced by Scottish steelworkers' families who needed to weigh the benefits of life in Canada against the loss of valuable ties with family in Scotland.

A lack of neighbourly support in Canada contributed to the social isolation experienced by the steelworkers and their Scottish wives – Scots did not necessarily live close to each other and were spread across the city. 'It takes a long time to get to know your neighbours [in Canada]' said Alan. In Scotland, the neighbourhoods were closer, both in population density and social networks.

Neighbours there got to know each other well and looked out for each other. As Derek told us, in Glasgow,

'it was a very tight-knit community... If you were in work and your neighbour was out of work, you sort of slipped him some ... a little bit of what you had, let's say. It was that sort of closeness'.

As they had found in their workplaces, participants noticed personality differences between Scots and their neighbours in Hamilton. Margaret, the wife of a steelworker, had been happy to move to a small town near Hamilton where she met many ex-patriot Scots. However, she still found it difficult to adjust to the more reserved nature of her Canadian neighbours. Once, soon after they had moved to Canada, Margaret brought in a neighbour's washing from the laundry line after it began to rain and was surprised when the woman was affronted. She said that was her first realisation that community ties were different in Canada than what she was used to. In Scotland, she told us, neighbours looked out for each other more.

Brenda (the daughter of a Scottish steelworker) agreed:

'I like the social network in Britain [more] than here. I think in Scotland, when you have neighbours, your neighbours are like your family and your neighbours get really close to you and they watch out for you. I find that is not quite the same here'.

Other participants told similar stories. Because the Hamilton communities they moved to were not as welcoming and supportive as their former neighbourhoods, the Scottish wives found it difficult to adjust to life in Canada.

'[My wife] found it harder to adapt over here than I did because she was dealing more with people. I mean, she would go to the bus stop ... and she would start talking to the people at the bus stop... it was just what we done in Scotland... Well, over here, it was like, "Why are you talking to me, lady? I don't even know you." She found that hard.' (Neil)

Although the focus of this study was on the experience of male Scottish immigrants, these stories reveal how social adjustment post-migration

posed different challenges for the men and their Scottish wives.

The move to Canada also offered a change in social system, one which participants described as less restricted by social stratification and the 'class' system, which was still influential in Britain at the time. Several participants spoke of their surprise coming to Canada, where, as Kyle put it, 'you couldn't tell a pauper from a millionaire; that is a wonderful thing'. Here, they found they were more likely to receive a loan from the bank, to be friendly with their superiors at work, and free to change jobs or careers. The move to a more egalitarian society was generally viewed as a positive aspect of their immigration to Canada. But for some immigrants, the change in class strained their relationships with friends who remained in Scotland. When visiting Scotland in later years, several participants said they were surprised to find their relationships with former close friends were – as Neil said, 'totally different'. Although they had a hard time articulating the reasons for these differences, their stories indicated that the move had led to a change in social values and status, which had impacted these relationships.

Lorne acknowledged that a change in values and personal identity is a natural part of immigrating to a new country and had impacted his friendships in Scotland:

'I don't think any of us have really kept up with the old friends there. ... you tend to drift away and lead your own life and I'm sure they do the same thing.... Your thinking changes because you're in another country. You pick up the habits of that country and they're still going their way in the habits of the old country' (Lorne).

Both Neil and Ken had experienced tension with former friends in Scotland upon returning for a visit. They believed the move to Canada, which had offered an increased standard of living and a resulting status shift for their families, contributed to these strained relationships.

'The way we were living was a lot better than what they were living... I think there was a little bit of tension and jealousy... their lifestyle was that much different from ours and we had both kind of started at the same level and we had gained, ahead of them' (Neil).

'[My experience was] foreign to them; it was outside of their lives... I wondered at times if there is a mild form of jealousy, the envy' (Ken).

These participants expressed some sadness speaking of the loss of these relationships but clearly valued the improvement in quality of life the move to Canada had brought for them and their families.

Rebuilding of Social Networks Through the Formation and Strengthening of Relationships

Although the Scottish steelworkers we spoke to had clearly experienced the loss of important social connections, they had also managed to establish new ties in their Canadian communities and strengthened their relationships with their immediate family and fellow immigrants from Scotland. With ties to family and friends in Scotland harder to maintain and less time spent at the pubs in Canada, several participants found their social lives included more time with their wives and children. At first, missing the connections with their parents and siblings, spouses relied on each other for mutual support. Derek spoke of how he and his wife helped each other ease the feelings of homesickness.

'Well, you miss the family, obviously. You become a little bit homesick. And we were fortunate as when I was homesick, my wife wasn't homesick, and when she was homesick, I wasn't homesick' (Derek).

Over time, the change in lifestyle that came with the move to Canada also increased their social time with their wives and children. The social life for men in Scotland was seen as so tied to the pub that drinking was seen as an unavoidable part of life there, particularly among steelworking men. Several participants thought it was a good thing that the move to Canada had removed them from that lifestyle and, as a result, strengthened their relationships with their wives and children.

'When we had a family... [we would] go to picnics and go to conservation areas and go for a drive in your car... They liked the fact that... I wasn't going to the pub all the time' (Kyle).

Interestingly, the same participants who spoke positively about their personal memories of Scottish pub life were critical of the cultural dependency on drinking there. Comparing his experience with friends and families who had stayed in Scotland, Kyle felt grateful for his move to Canada, which [he felt] had disconnected him from the drinking culture and benefitted his relationship with his wife. 'All my brothers and sisters still do what I was talking about', he told us.

'They go to the pub to get drunk... The best thing I ever did in my whole life, likely, when I got married is come to Canada, I would say for ... my partner's life and for my own well being in life, I think'.

Beyond spending more time with their wives, some participants found that life in Canada helped their marriages in other ways. Each of the participants related stories about the poor housing conditions, low wages, environmental pollution, and religious conflicts in Scotland at the time, conditions which added stress to their relationships. Keith and his wife said they chose to move to Canada partly because his Catholic wife was not welcomed by his Protestant family. For Scott, financial pressures in Scotland put a strain on his marriage and motivated both he and his wife to move to Canada. He credits their long marriage with their decision to migrate.

'If I had wanted to struggle through that two or three years [more] of it, my wife and I would probably get divorced before that time because we were at each other's throat, trying to make a living and all the rest of it. But as it right now, my wife and I, touch wood, have our 40 year coming up' (Scott).

Although the move was not easy for him or his wife, he does not regret their decision, particularly for the value it brought to his marriage.

Even the men who met and married Canadians post-migration credit their marriages with helping to ease their adjustment to life in Canada. Ken found acclimatising to life in Canada 'difficult', missing the social connections of his Scottish workplace and neighbourhood, until his marriage 5 years later to a Canadian. After that, he says, he felt 'very happy' here. Douglas was also single when he moved to Canada; when he met his Canadian wife, most of his friends were other

Scots. It was through his wife that he had met and formed friendships with other Canadians.

The steelworkers' social networks had naturally broadened over the 30 or more years they had lived in Canada to include a diverse circle of friends and family; however, most were still anchored by valued relationships with fellow Scottish immigrants. After moving to Canada, six participants had initially connected with extended family members, who had previously moved from Scotland. Although none of the participants said these contacts were responsible for their decision to immigrate, all found them to be a source of support in the weeks after their move, offering a place to stay, financial support, or links to steelworking jobs in Hamilton factories.

Fellow Scottish immigrants provided valuable social support for the steelworkers. Bob's employer moved a group of workers from its Glasgow branch to Hamilton at the same time. 'We were all socializing together', Bob told us, 'Which made the move easier... it helps you settle'. Similarly, Ian moved from Scotland to Canada after a transfer to a steelworking plant, which had branches in both countries. He and his wife Margaret were pleasantly surprised to find their new community (about half an hour from Hamilton) was densely populated with Scots, some of whom were friends of friends from 'back home'. They had found it easier to form relationships with fellow Scots than their Canadian neighbours.

'These connections with other Scottish immigrants were also valuable for the Scottish wives, particularly in the early days after their move, when they relied on each other for support and friendship. Over here, everybody had a phone. So, in fact, when we were at work, this is how the wives get through the day, was talking with the other wives on the phone, because so many of the women were homesick' (Bob).

Brenda said her father chose to spend time at the British drinking clubs in Hamilton because there he could socialise with other Scots. It is natural for new arrivals to seek out and develop relationships with other immigrants, she felt:

'I think when you come to a new country... I guess immigrants ... they go to what is familiar and they go to those people that are familiar to them... people feel comfortable in their own group, with their own kind, right?' (Brenda)

Of our participants, three had been friends in Glasgow and retained their friendships after moving to Canada within a year of each other. Over 40 years later, they still see each other regularly, vacation, golf, and curl together, maintaining their ties to the Scottish ex-pat community. Another two participants – acquaintances from high school in Glasgow – strengthened their friendship after both moved to the Hamilton area; they are still friends to this day. These men clearly valued their friendships with each other and considered these links with fellow Scottish immigrants as an integral part of their social network.

Outside of the home and Scottish community, new social networks were often built through involvement in sports and recreational activities. The majority of study participants were physically active, with life-long involvement in sports and recreational activities such as hiking or skiing with their families. With two exceptions, all of the steelworkers we spoke to had joined recreational sports teams after their move to Canada. They described their involvement in sports such as soccer, golf, and curling as a way to meet new friends and connect with other Scots. In fact, a few participants told us that local sports teams provided their first point of contact for friendships after their move to Hamilton.

'Acclimatizing was difficult. If it hadn't been for sports, I think it would have been very difficult. That was a common denominator' (Ken).

Recreational activities also provided a social connection for the wives and families of steelworkers, a venue for family members – often other Scottish families – to gather and socialise.

'My wife and my son always came to the games. So my wife got involved with the other wives and my son got involved with the other kids, and everybody had a good time' (Alistair).

In some ways, involvement in sports and recreation replaced the social connection of pub life in Scotland. Social drinking was almost always incorporated into their team sports events, and participants used similar terms to describe what they enjoyed about their sports

teams here, as they had used to describe the social connections they gained at the pub in Scotland.

'It's just a day out with the guys and a little male-bonding type thing. Then you go for a couple of beers' (Lorne).

Although participants spoke fondly of the social camaraderie found in their local pubs in Scotland, some felt that pub life was socially important only because there were few other options. As Neil told us, 'There's certainly less to do over there than there is here ... over there you basically – you go to the pub, you go to the betting shop'. For our participants, involvement in team sports provided an alternative venue to create social ties immediately after their move to Canada, and as a way to retain and broaden a social network in the years since. Most were still involved in recreational sports in their retirement years, primarily as a social activity.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

For the Scottish steelworkers we spoke to, immigration to Canada, movement through the life course, and social networks are all intimately intertwined, as industrial decline in Glasgow coincided with significant life events, and both facilitated movement overseas. Although there might have been multiple motivations for leaving Scotland, our interest was to focus on the impact on their social networks. Arrivals had clearly experienced a disruption of their social networks after immigrating to Canada, yet their change of social circumstances was not necessarily seen as negative. With one exception, the steelworkers were young men when they immigrated, starting their careers and, in many cases, their families. They realised that a shift in their social lives was inevitable regardless of their decision to move to Canada, and indeed, this realisation appeared to motivate that decision. They came to Canada desiring a change, seeking improved social and economic opportunities for themselves and their children. Several explicitly hoped to distance themselves (and their families) from social problems and family issues in Scotland, such as the prevalence of social drinking, depressed economic circumstances, and religious divides. Our participants had no regrets about moving;

they had long ago accepted their decision to immigrate, and time cemented this decision, particularly following the death of parents and disconnection from friends back home.

We might assume that Scottish steelworkers moving to Hamilton – a culturally similar area to Scotland with a long history of Scottish immigration and strong links to the UK – might feel a stronger sense of belonging and experience a smoother social adjustment following immigration, and in some ways, this appeared to be true. At the time of their move, many had immediate access to the support of family members or friends who had previously immigrated, as well as social advantages (an increased standard of living, the presence of established Scottish ex-pat communities) that made the transition easier. However, this does not imply that they settled in close proximity to each other and were certainly located throughout the city by the time of the interviews.

Despite the cultural similarities, the steelworkers had still experienced social isolation at times that limited their ability to form supportive networks (particularly with co-workers and neighbours). With an established British community in the area, there were pubs and social clubs where Scottish men could connect with fellow immigrants. However, the 'urban village' culture of Scotland did not transplant easily to the local geography and sociology of Hamilton neighbourhoods. The physical proximity to work, home, friends, and family in Scotland had facilitated the formation of social networks in a way that the more diverse and dispersed communities within Hamilton could not. As a result, the steelworkers had – at least initially – experienced homesickness and found it more isolated and difficult to 'fit in', a point that provides an interesting contrast with the experience of Scots who moved to Corby, England, to work in the steel industry there, where weekend travel made isolation less likely (Harper, 2013).

This social adjustment proved even more challenging for the Scottish wives who had accompanied their husbands to Canada. Similar to Richardson's study of Britons moving to Australia during that period (Richardson, 1961), the wives who had moved with their steelworking husbands from Scotland were, in general, 'trailing spouses': accompanying their husbands as the men pursued a change of work or standard of living. However, the wives were not passive partners; as Richardson (1961) and Ryan (2009) have found,

the social adjustment of immigrants to their new place of residence is closely related to their spouse's satisfaction. Without prompting, our participants spoke of their own social adjustment in Canada in tandem with that of their wives: they felt homesick and missed their parents, but these feelings were especially difficult for their wives; both they and their wives missed the social camaraderie of their close Scottish communities; and they were grateful that their links with fellow Scottish immigrant families helped provide support and friendships for their wives. Although our participants felt the social ties and economic benefits they gained in Canada compensated for the Scottish ties they had lost, they told us of other Scottish families who had found the social challenges too great and ultimately returned to their home country.

Significantly, the steelworkers we spoke to had actively sought to rebuild their social networks. Almost immediately after moving, many joined British social clubs and recreational sports teams, where they could connect with fellow Scots and those with similar interests. These activities appeared to provide a sense of belonging, a place where they 'fit in'; they were also familiar activities, mirroring their social past-times in Scotland. Proximity to immigrants from the same cultural background or home country can facilitate the formation of supportive social networks (Ley & Germain, 2000), and this appeared to be the case for our participants. Although the steelworkers' social networks were more ethnically diverse in Canada, some of their most valued relationships were with fellow Scots living in the Hamilton area whose families were in similar circumstances. For many, the social connections they had formed with fellow Scots soon after their move endured as their closest friendships throughout the decades until the time of this study.

Involvement in sports – in particular – had helped these men to link with and befriend fellow Scottish immigrants with similar interests and experiences but also provided opportunities to build broader networks with those outside their cultural group. Interestingly, some of the same men who told us they felt alienated among their ethnically diverse workmates had formed friendships with a diversity of other immigrants through their recreational sports teams. This finding supports previous studies, which reveal the importance of team sports in bridging cultural

boundaries, countering social isolation, and building trust (e.g. see Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Walseth, 2008) and implies a compensatory effect whereby acceptance in one area counters alienation (even if only perceived) in another.

The material and emotional assets – the social capital – that immigrants can draw from social networks depends on a complex of personal and situational factors, with these assets changing over time. Some of the value the steelworkers gained were the ‘bonds of community’ discussed earlier, mutual connections with fellow Scots (what Putnam, 2001, refers to as ‘bonding capital’), and with people from different backgrounds (‘bridging capital’). In other ways, their measure of capital reflected Bourdieu’s perspective: valuing where they ‘fit in’ and the social benefits they had gained, weighed in comparison with others and what they had left behind. The move to Canada resulted in an increase in wages, standard of living, and – as a result – social status, a change they clearly valued. For many, these advantages had stimulated their decision to immigrate and were the reason that they decided to stay.

Our results reflect the feelings and experiences of the Scottish steelworkers who chose to migrate and settle in the Hamilton area, and it was clear that this decision was informed by the evaluation (and re-evaluation) of their social circumstances over time. We recognise that our study cannot speak for those who returned home to Scotland (see McCollum, 2011, for a discussion of return migration to Scotland). These are the challenges of any retrospective study, and naturally, we can only present the experiences of those who chose to share with us. That said, retrospective studies such as this one, focused on those who have remained, help to identify factors that both challenge and facilitate the formation of social networks for new immigrants and thereby contribute to our understanding of how social networks evolve over time. Moreover, further research is required on how the experiences of those who chose to remain in Scotland compare with those of many friends, family, and colleagues who took advantage of the employment opportunities offered by emigration to Canada.

Finally, these findings also suggest the need to more closely examine the role of prevailing social structures in network formation. The development of broad, supportive social networks is often more difficult in culturally diverse neighbourhoods,

where family members and friends are spread across a city, and access to transit, poverty, language, and cultural barriers can limit new immigrants’ sense of belonging and the formation of meaningful social connections (Lalonde, 1993; Kazemipur, 2004). Our participants had greater social and cultural advantages, making it easier to rebuild their social networks over time, yet even they noted the difficulty of doing so. New arrivals who are less able to integrate into the labour market, speak a different language, and/or are visible minorities may face greater acculturation barriers, and the challenges of building social networks may be magnified.

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NOTES

- (1) Although the term ‘social networks’ has been variously defined to include even the most distant of social ties, this study follows the example of Boyd (1989), Ryan (2009) and others in conceptualising ‘social networks’ as those personal relationships held with family, kin, friends, and community members.
- (2) The literature associated with earlier immigration from Scotland to Canada is more diverse. See, for example, Devine (2003), Harper (2003), Calder (2003), Messamore (2004) and Rider and McNabb (2006).

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Emigration of Scottish Steelworkers to Canada

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